

FLORIDA GRASSHOPPER SPARROW INTERNSHIP AT WHITE OAK

White Oak conserves and sustains some of the earth's rarest wild animals through innovative training, research, education, breeding and field programs that contribute to the survival of wildlife in nature. The conservation programs span 700 acres along the St. Mary's River in northeast Florida, surrounded by over 17,000 acres of mixed forest and wetlands that make up the beautiful White Oak property. Founded in 1982, White Oak leads professional efforts to improve veterinary care, develop holistic animal management techniques, and better understand the biology of critically endangered species by providing excellent care and managing conservation programs for over 30 species of imperiled wildlife in large, naturalistic habitats.

The Florida grasshopper sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum floridanus*) is one of the most endangered birds in North America. In a cooperative effort with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Tall Timbers Research Station, captive breeding and reintroduction protocols were established with a close relative, the Eastern grasshopper sparrow (*A. s. pratensis*). Beginning in 2016, with less than 30 known breeding pairs left in the wild, White Oak utilized these protocols to initiate conservation breeding of the Florida grasshopper sparrow. The unique 'hands off' management style has resulted in captive bred offspring that exhibit natural wild behaviors suitable for release. Beginning in 2019, White Oak's breeding program success resulted in reintroductions to the wild which continue to occur.



White Oak is seeking a qualified applicant with a strong passion for avian conservation to assist with all aspects of the avian team, with specific focus on the grasshopper sparrow program. The *Florida Grasshopper Sparrow Internship* provides participants a strong in-situ and ex-situ conservation experience with the unique opportunity to utilize field technician skills in the management and husbandry of captive breeding populations designated for release. The internship requires the creation and implementation of a sparrow-focused project and commitment to the selected schedule and work duties.

Provided Skills and Experiences (experiential and observation):

- General husbandry- feeding, shifting, and observation in large enclosures with natural social groupings
- Hand-rearing passerines
- Breeding introductions and management
- Transport (in-house and external)
- Veterinary care
- Avian capture and hand restraint
- Imprinting prevention
- Artificial incubation and hatching
- Egg management and candling
- Pre-release conditioning
- Non-chemical fire ant control methods
- Reintroduction programs
- Identifying avian vocalizations
- Daily reporting
- Diet preparation
- Flight restriction management
- Assisted reproduction techniques
- Identifying individuals
- Sample collection
- Guest interactions and education
- Enclosure landscaping and maintenance
- Camera trapping and video monitoring
- Research and scientific management basics
- Sweeping for wild insects

Application Information:

The *Florida Grasshopper Sparrow Internship* is a six-month, 40 hour a week, paid internship. The selected candidate will receive a \$1,460 taxable monthly stipend and free housing at White Oak for the duration of the internship. Interns will share an apartment with another intern of the same gender. The work schedule will include weekends and holidays. Due to the potential of around-the-clock hand-rearing of altricial passerines, the applicant must have a flexible schedule and availability to work a daytime or afternoon/evening shift as needed. White Oak provides transportation to and from the Jacksonville airport (for initial pick-up and final drop-off only). Interns have access to select White Oak amenities including a fitness center and swimming pool. Housing for pets and/or spouses is not available. White Oak reserves the right to terminate internships at any time. There will be no guarantee of employment at the end of the internship. To avoid conflicts, the selected candidate will not be eligible for job openings at White Oak that occur during the internship.



2020 Grasshopper Sparrow Internship Sessions				
Session	Apply	Review	Start Date*	End Date*
Breeding Season	January 1-29 th , 2020	February 2020	4/1/2020	10/2/2020
Fall & Winter	August 1-31 st , 2020	Sept. 2020	10/7/2020	4/2/2021

*Session dates may alter slightly

Eligibility Requirements

- Previous avian experience required, with passerine hand-rearing and handling experience preferred
- Ability to identify color bands on small birds from a distance and hear and identify soft/quiet sounds
- Enrolled in, or recently graduated (less than 3 years) from college or high school
- Ability to lift 50 lbs. without difficulty, work in adverse weather conditions including Florida's summer climate, and remain on feet for long periods of time
- 18 years old or over, have proof of a valid driver's license and health insurance
- Pass a drug test upon the start of the internship
- Eligible to work in the United States at the time of application
- Ability to work both independently and in a collaborative team environment
- Strong oral and written communication skills
- Self-motivated, strong initiative, detail oriented and resourceful
- Willing to learn new skills and make the most of the internship experience

How to Apply

All candidates will submit in ONE document a resume/CV, a list of 3 professional reference's contact information, and a cover letter explaining their career goals and how the internship will help them achieve those goals. Only electronic submissions will be accepted (.doc, .docx, or .pdf only). Please send application materials to training@white-oak.org with the subject line: 'Grasshopper Sparrow Internship Application'. Applications materials must be submitted within the application period for consideration.